

THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

# ZONE

MIDLANDS EDITION

DECEMBER 2016  
ISSUE 236

## CHICAGO COMES TO BRUM

JOHN PARTRIDGE STARS IN HIT  
MUSICAL CHICAGO  
FEATURE INSIDE

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ON BEING GAY IN FOOTBALL

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VINTAGE NEW LOOK

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NIGHTLIFE +  
CLUBBING GUIDE

+  
VIRAL  
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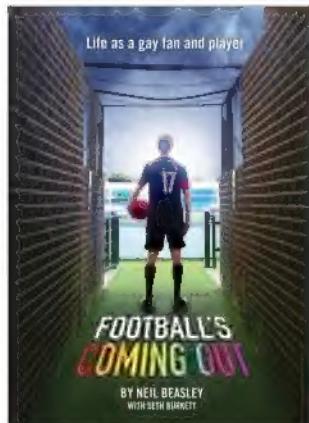
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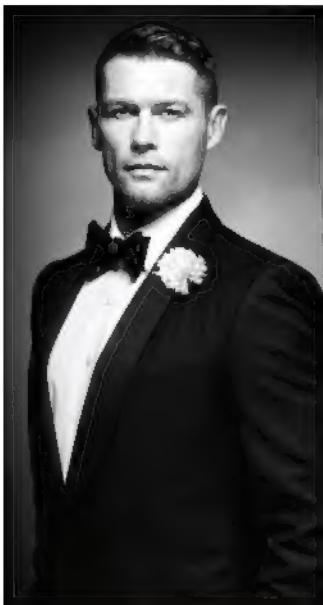
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# THE CELL BLOCK TANGO COMES TO BRUM

*John Partridge this month stars in Chicago at the New Alexandra Theatre. Heather Kincaid finds out more...*



"It's a dream of a part. I get to flick the hair, shine the shoes, put on the tux, and get draped in feathers!"

Chicago in the 1920s. These are violent, troubled times, where danger lurks in shadows and gangsters run the show. It's also the beginning of a burgeoning celebrity culture, with the growth of Hollywood movies, popular music and a booming media industry combining to nurture a new breed of megastars. Sensational stories sell, and journalists prowl the streets, sniffing out the juiciest morsels they can find in the hope of making headlines...

Living and working among them is Maurine Dallas Watkins, a young reporter for the Chicago Tribune. It's while covering two high-profile murders that she sees how celebrity obsession is changing the way that courts treat criminals, prompting her to write a play based on her stories. Nearly 50 years later, the play would be transformed into what would become the longest-running American musical on Broadway, outdone only by the British *Phantom Of The Opera*.

Forty-one years after its smash-hit US debut, *Chicago* is undertaking a brand new UK tour, arriving at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre in time for Christmas. The production's fabulous cast includes *EastEnders*' John Partridge in the starring role of slick, quick-talking lawyer Billy Flynn, a character he imagines might have carved a slightly different career were he around today...

"Billy is the King of Spin," explains Partridge. "I guess today's equivalent would be something like a PR Guru. It's his job to raise the profiles of our two loveable murderers, Roxy and Velma, to ensure their names stay in the press and ultimately get them let off for their crimes. It's a dream of a part. I get to flick the hair, shine the shoes, put on the tux, and get draped in feathers!" Some things change while others stay the same. The internet and the explosion of reality TV might have affected the way we in-

teract with our celebrities today, not to mention swelling their ranks enormously, but ultimately, our culture is a continuation of the one that Watkins saw emerging close to a century ago.

"It's very topical now," Partridge continues. "Even when the musical was conceived back in 1975, I don't think we had any idea of how celebrity culture would explode. It's everywhere now - it's in people's homes, on television, in magazines and on social media. There's no getting away from it. I think that's part of the reason the show has this lasting appeal - the story is very contemporary in its nature but it's dealt with in this old-school way."

Doing justice to the powerful story and its compelling characters is paramount in this production, which has been stripped clean of all the flashy and sometimes shallow extras that are often part and parcel of large-scale musicals.

"It's a very stark, minimal set that we have, which really focuses your attention on the narrative and the storytelling of the show. There are no scene changes and no costume changes, which is quite unusual for a musical and quite brave. Often, shows rely on sets and costumes, perhaps because they need to, whereas *Chicago* is so powerful that it doesn't need all the extras. It does mean audiences have to really pay attention, though, because they're not being directed by the set. That's what makes it such a great piece for an actor - it means that we're in charge of taking the audience on the journey, rather than external things doing that for you."

Rest assured, however, that the show will still look and sound fantastic. It might not be conventionally flamboyant, but it's still undeniably stylish in its own way, packed full of iconic musical numbers and incredible choreography.

"It's a very clever, highly stylised musical.



The choreography and the dialogue and the songs are all woven seamlessly together so that everything is very fluid, and there really is something for everybody. The score is legendary - you couldn't ask for a better one - and our band is absolutely exceptional. People often forget that Chicago has a jazz score, and in this tour, we have an amazing 12-strong jazz band who're very much part of the show. In my opinion, they're worth the ticket price alone! We also have one of the sexiest ensembles of dancers that you'll see on stage this Christmas, trust me!"

With its clever script, intricate dancing and stand-out musical numbers, you might think that such a complex and demanding show would make hours of practice and rehearsal an essential, but for Partridge, fresh from his stint on *Celebrity Big Brother*, time was a luxury not afforded in this case.

"I actually only had three days' rehearsal, which I do not recommend!" he laughs. "It was scary. I came out of the *Big Brother* house on the Friday, did all the press that went with that, and then I had my first rehearsal on the Monday. When we opened on the Wednesday, there were a lot of grey-faced producers standing in the wings thinking, 'Oh my God, is he gonna pull this off?' But fortunately musical theatre is in my blood. I went into *Cats* when I was 16 and I'm now 46, so it's something I've done for a

long time. And, I'm pleased to say, it all came off. Funnily enough, I'm going to be going through another hair-raising rehearsal period shortly - we finish *Chicago* on 31 December, and then my next show, *La Cage Aux Folles*, opens in Oxford on 5 January. It seems to be becoming what I'm known for!"

Of course, it may have helped that Partridge already had some familiarity with the role, having initially been offered it back in 2010. But since beginning this year's tour, he's had plenty of time to get to grips with Billy, continually learning, finessing and developing the part.

"When I was first offered it in 2010, I turned it down because I didn't think I had the maturity, but when I knew the show was coming round again, I actively threw my hat into the ring. Luckily they were very receptive and offered me the part straight away. I've had a wonderful time doing it - it's a great company, we've really grown together, and we're all still constantly finding new ways of playing it. In Birmingham we're also going to be joined by Mica Paris, and it's always lovely to have a fresh viewpoint on something, especially at this stage in the tour."

Partridge is no stranger to working during the Christmas season. Over the last five years, he's appeared in various pantomimes, including Birmingham Hippodrome's *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs*

In 2013.

"This is the first year in a while that I won't be slapping my thigh and mugging outrageously to the audience for laughs! I'm afraid working over Christmas is all part and parcel of being an actor - the holidays are our busy times, so we take our vacations at other times of the year. But all my family are going to come and watch the show on Boxing Day - if I've got to do two shows on Boxing Day then they can all come and see me!"

And while treading the boards instead of flopping in front of the telly at the height of the holiday season isn't for everyone, Partridge is looking forward to being back here for another Christmas show, having thoroughly enjoyed his stint in the UK's biggest and best panto.

"Every audience is different, and every town you visit has a different sort of feel. Some are harder than others, but others are on their feet the minute you come out on stage! I've always found the audiences to be very warm and receptive in Birmingham, so I'm glad to be coming back."

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**Chicago shows at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday 12 to Saturday 31 December.**

# FOOTBALL'S COMING OUT

*Local author Neil Beasley has published a book about his life in football, as both a gay fan and player. Midlands Zone talks to him to find out more...*

**"I've made some great friends through football, and that's been the biggest highlight"**

**You've had a love for football since you were a child. What attracted you to the Beautiful Game?**

In short, the excitement of it all. From playground bragging rights for the weekend's winner to willing on the underdog in the FA Cup. Football is the nation's most popular sport and brings people together. Also, nothing beats the feeling of starting classes again after scoring a hat trick on the school field at lunchtime!

**What made you decide to write a book about your journey in football as both a gay player and fan?**

There was nothing on the market from the everyday grassroots player and fan. I contacted a publisher, who loved the idea. After a few discussions, I signed the contract and we got started. I think we both saw a gap in the market for this type of story to be told.

**Your book, Football's Coming Out: Life As A Gay Fan And Player, chronicles your difficult journey in coming out to your teammates over a number of years. What would you say was the hardest moment for you?**

Remembering the timeline of events to put in the book was pretty hard! No, probably the time between deciding to come out and actually doing it. There were a lot of different scenarios running around in my head about what might happen when I came out. In the end, nothing happened. No one cared! I worried what the friends who I'd known for years would think, as I'd basically been lying to them, pretending to like Kelly Brook just like they did!

**You mention in your book that you'd experienced homophobia whilst watching a match - and again whilst playing in Europe. How did it make you feel at the time?**

Angry. I was at Wembley for an England match with my family when a supporter behind me started insulting the players with homophobic abuse. I wanted to turn round

and give him a piece of my mind, but instead I kept quiet and didn't challenge it. Playing in Europe I've also witnessed a bit. That bothers me less than the England game experience, as there's little I can really do about it.

**Do you think homophobia on the terraces has reduced in recent years, or do you think there's still a lot of it about?**

There's still plenty of it about - the Brighton fans can confirm that. They get abuse every week. Unlike racism, homophobia is rarely challenged on the terraces. It's often passed off as 'banter', which in the football world means you can say whatever vile and disgusting comments you want to, as it's 'just a laugh'. The football authorities are guilty here, though, for doing very little.

**What's being done to kick homophobia out of football?**

Not enough. There are plenty of organisations trying to do their bit, but there needs to be a more unified effort. The footballing authorities need to be firmer. The emergence of LGBT fan groups in the last few years has been a positive step.

**Football v Homophobia is becoming quite a big movement, with some of the country's biggest football clubs actively taking part. Why should clubs get involved?**

During the month of action in February, you see quite a big take-up of clubs supporting the campaign. There seem to be fewer clubs taking part at the lower end of the footballing pyramid, but year on year the take-up seems to be increasing. I think it's a good opportunity for the clubs to show their support for their LGBT fans, of which there will be many!

**You became a big part of Birmingham Blaze FC - the city's gay football club - both as a player and as chairman. Were you proud of your achievements there?**

Yes, extremely. I've lost count of all the things we've won. The biggest achievement



Neil Beasley (right) with husband David



Neil and Blaze winning gold!



Neil and his Birmingham Blaze teammates

was being the holders of a European gold medal at the same time as being national and regional champions. That's quite a feat, and it's unlikely any other LGBT sports team, Midlands or otherwise, will ever do that again. That's something I'm very proud of. I've also played at Villa Park three times. I like to mention that a lot as well!

## "Unlike racism, homophobia is rarely challenged on the terraces"

**What would you say to people thinking about joining a gay football team such as Birmingham Blaze?**

Do it. We have a laugh, but we also take the sport seriously. What's the point of not taking sport seriously? I've been to so many places that I wouldn't have been to without joining Blaze. The opportunities have been amazing. I've made some great friends through football, and that's been the biggest highlight.

**You're also a Coventry City FC fan. As a result, you founded the Coventry City LGBT Supporters group. Why is there a need for such a group in 2016?**

Shush! I try not to mention that! That's a question that gets asked a lot. For me, it was about creating a link between the club and its LGBT fans - although that's easier said than done. It also gives you a chance to get in contact with other like-minded fans.

**With regard to the professional game, do you think there's a need for a top-flight professional footballer to come out?**

I don't think there's a need unless they want to. It's a personal choice for everyone. If a player wanted to, they'd have so much they would need to consider, and that could potentially have a negative effect on their performance. When I decided to come out, that was all I could think about leading up to it. I can't say it had a detrimental effect on my performances, though, as they were poor anyway!

**People say it doesn't matter if footballers are gay, straight, black or white, as long as they can kick a ball properly. Do you agree?**

It shouldn't matter at all. Thankfully we've come an awful long way with racism, but unfortunately we haven't with sexuality. Football fans look for weaknesses to put off an opposition player, and to some, being gay is not compatible with the macho environment of football. They are, however, wrong!

**What do you think of football agents who reportedly advise players not to come out, as it may ruin their career?**

It may ruin their career and it may also have a negative impact on their life. It depends if the agents are looking after the welfare of the players or looking after their own interests. A player who takes some time out or isn't performing to the best of their ability isn't a very lucrative client, and that's a potential consequence of coming out. No one can know for sure until it actually happens.

**You fell in love with football, and as a result, football led you to fall in love. Did you ever imagine you'd meet your husband through the game?**

No, I didn't. I always thought I would marry Tom Daley or Chris Mears - and if I fell lucky, maybe a Hollywood A-lister! No, seriously, the moment I met him I fell for him. He's amazing and has the patience of a

saint, which you definitely need when you're with me. I remember the first time we played for Blaze together, he tackled someone by doing some sort of Kung Fu kick. It was love at first sight!

**Finally, have you got any plans to write any other books in the future?**

There are lots of plans. I've had some interest regarding making documentaries and maybe a short film about the book. I'd like to revisit the book in 10 years' time and write another on the same subject, to see how things have changed. Writing was fun - I'd like to have a go at a children's story next. Who knows!



**Football's Coming Out: Life As A Gay Fan And Player** by Neil Beasley (with Seth Burkett) is out now and available from Amazon.co.uk for £9.99.

# New LGBT addiction and mental health charity launched in Birmingham

A new LGBT charity has launched in Birmingham, with backing from the Lord Mayor, Councillor Carl Rice.

Nightlife Outreach looks to address the issue of substance abuse and resulting mental health problems for LGBT people.

One in four of the UK's population will experience mental health issues during their lifetime.

The potential suicide rate amongst young gay people (aged 16 to 24) is worryingly high, with 44% of people surveyed saying they have considered suicide at some point.

Substance abuse by LGBT people is also significantly higher than the national average, with 68% of people having used illicit drugs in the past year.

Tom Jenkins, chief executive of Nightlife Outreach, said: "There's a real issue about New Psychoactive Substances - formerly known as 'legal highs' - which are far cheaper and more easily available than traditional drugs such as ecstasy and cocaine.

"It's extremely concerning that adolescents as young as 16 can find easy access to these chemicals. Because they're new and novel, nobody really knows what the long-term impact actually is.

"What we do know is that these chemicals flood the brain with dopamine - a 'happy' chemical. It messes with your brain chemistry, which makes these New Psychoactive Substances extremely psychologically addictive. Over time, somebody will need to use more



and more to get the same high."

The Lord Mayor of Birmingham said: "Charities and community organisations play an increasingly important role within public service commissioning, bringing specialist expertise and knowledge to the table.

"Having met with Nightlife Outreach, I'm in-

credibly impressed by the passion, dedication and determination shown by the team on this incredibly important issue of good physical and mental health for people within Birmingham and the wider West Midlands."

## Coventry Pride announces new location for 2017



Coventry Pride is moving to a new venue in 2017.

The popular festival, which is being held on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 June, will take place in the city's University Square.

Organisers are promising live music and entertainment, commercial, charity and information stalls and an open, friendly vibe.

It's hoped that the new location will make Pride less crowded and easier to access, while at the same time maintaining the intimate community atmosphere that its organisers are aiming for.

If you'd like to get involved, or donate to help make Coventry Pride 2017 happen, get in touch at [info@coventrypride.org.uk](mailto:info@coventrypride.org.uk), or find them on Facebook and Twitter at @pridecov.

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## NHS England has power to fund PrEP, rules Court of Appeal



The Court of Appeal has ruled that NHS England can fund a drug which prevents HIV infection in people at high risk of contracting the virus.

NHS England had previously said that local authorities should provide the pre-exposure prophylaxis drug, more commonly known as PrEP, as they are responsible for preventative health.

It is estimated that about 14,000 people would be eligible for the drug in England.

NHS England have said that the judgement confirmed it has the ability to fund PrEP, but is not obligated to do so.

Terrence Higgins Trust has welcomed the ruling, calling for NHS England to do the right thing and respect its legal duty to consider funding the treatment.

Ian Green, Chief Executive of Terrence Higgins Trust, said: "PrEP is nothing short of a game-changer, and, if used alongside condoms, regular testing and treatment, it could be the vital piece of the puzzle to help end the HIV epidemic for good."

"Two courts have now ruled that NHS England does in fact have the legal power to fund PrEP. It's time for NHS England to do the right thing and respect its legal duty to consider funding this highly effective treatment."

"The conduct of NHS England around the funding of PrEP has reminded us that, 30 years on, HIV is still stigmatised in a way that many other health conditions are not."

"Every day that the NHS delays access to PrEP, 17 people are diagnosed with HIV - and the lifetime cost to the NHS for each diagnosis of HIV is £360,000. PrEP must be prioritised and made available now to those at risk."

"There's still a long way to go before people at risk have access to this groundbreaking pill that will protect them from HIV - but thanks to today's decision, we're a step closer to a world without HIV transmissions."

## Record number attend LGBT professional networking event

A Midlands professional networking organisation for LGBT people recently attracted its biggest ever turnout. Out Of Office's autumn get-together was attended by more than 90 professionals.

The event took place at Birmingham's Japanese restaurant, Rofuto, with guests enjoying a selection of sushi dishes while taking in the scenic views from the venue's 16th-floor sky bar. Commenting on the event, Out Of Office's organiser, Matt Walker, said: "We're proud that Out Of Office has grown to become one of the most popular LGBT networking groups outside London, now with over 500 members. At each event we continue to welcome new faces, as well as familiar ones, to join us in a relaxed environment where guests network and make friends."

"Out Of Office has provided many LGBT newcomers to the city with the opportunity to meet new people and gain business contacts away from the party atmosphere of the bustling gay village."

Information about Out Of Office Birmingham can be found on the group's Facebook page. Events can be searched for and booked via Eventbrite.



*Matt Walker, event organiser, with Laura Beech and Bradley Meersand at Out Of Office*

## European bear cruise for two on offer at this month's XXL men-only event in Birmingham

Two lucky party revellers at Birmingham's popular men-only night, XXL, could find themselves heading off on a week-long European bear cruise next year.

Guys attending the XXLvCruise4Bears event at Birmingham's Core Club on Friday 16 December could win the cruise for two by taking part in a special raffle.

The event is being billed as a Cruising Party and takes place in conjunction with Cruise4Bears. The company are sponsors of the hugely popular Sitges Bear Week and organisers of the Sitges Med Cruise4Bears event, which takes place after Bear Week.

The two lucky raffle winners will set sail from Southampton in May next year, on board the Royal Caribbean ship, Navigator Of The

Seas. The week-long tour of Europe will start off at Le Havre in France, Lisbon in Portugal and Vigo in Spain.

The cruise will feature a host of on-board parties, dinners and tours for bears.

A post-cruise XXL party will take place in London upon arrival back in the UK.

A second chance to enter the raffle will be available at XXL London on Saturday 17 December.

For those not feeling lucky but who would like to join the cruise, prices start at £688 per person for a double interior room, based on double occupancy.

Visit [cruise4bears.com](http://cruise4bears.com) for more information.

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**Free, private and confidential sexual health checks to gay & bisexual men, and men who have sex with men (MSM).**

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City Celts Sauna Clinic:  
Day: Mondays | Time: 4pm - 7pm  
Day: Wednesdays | Time: 3pm - 5pm  
Place: 33 New Bond Street, Leicester, LE1 4RQ

Splash Spa & Leisure

Day: Thursdays  
Time: 3pm - 6pm  
Place: 61 Bedford Street, Leicester, LE1 3JR



You can also check out Trade Sexual Health:  
[www.tradesexualhealth.com](http://www.tradesexualhealth.com)

# Sexual health charity launches Leicester sexuality, gender identity and faith project



**Trade Sexual Health** this month begins running a series of engagement activities to provide open discussions between Leicester's LGBT and faith communities.

The initiative, launched in partnership with St Philip's Centre, is funded by Leicester City Council's Community Engagement Fund.

The initial awareness-raising seminar will introduce the project, explain its purpose and look at some of the research behind it.

There will also be an opportunity to hear LGBT people of faith explain their journey towards reconciling their sexuality, gender identity and religious beliefs.

Following the event, there will be a series of closed, shared conversations between community faith leaders, faith community change-makers and LGBT individuals. The purpose of the conversations will be to gather information and to action the best methods of

understanding and supporting LGBT people of faith, in so doing increasing the resilience between the city's faith and LGBT communities

Places for the event are limited, so if you're passionate about taking positive steps towards change, you're encouraged to sign up now.

Trade is particularly interested in accessing input from the following: Faith community leaders; members of faith communities or congregations; lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people of faith; faith and chaplaincy services and organisations, including committee members, other members and volunteers and changemakers who feel passionate about issues around sexuality, gender identity and/or belief/religion.

To register your interest, visit [tradesexua.health.com](http://tradesexua.health.com)

## Stock up on condoms for Christmas, urge Staffordshire sexual health services

**Sexual health clinics in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire will be closed on the bank holidays over Christmas, so they're urging people to stock up on condoms ready for the festive season.**

Clinics across the region will be closed on Monday 26 and Tuesday 27 December, as well as Monday 2 January. Cobridge Community Health Centre will be open as usual on Saturdays, from 9.30am to 2pm.

Free condoms and lube are available from all sexual health clinics, as well as from the Sexual Health Prevention Team, who will be

out and about around Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire in the lead up to Christmas. The team will be in colleges, universities, bars, clubs and town centres, handing out free condoms, lube and C-Cards, which give people access to free condoms from any pharmacies showing a C-Card logo. Andrew Horton, HIV Prevention Lead, said "Make sure that as well as writing those Christmas lists for presents, you remember to stock up on some of our free condom packs, so that you know you're covered for the Christmas period. Our clinics will be closed

**Birmingham LGBT announces its festive-season opening hours**

### Birmingham LGBT Centre



Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual health charity Birmingham LGBT has announced its opening hours over the festive period.

The charity will once again be opening on Christmas Day (from 2pm to 7pm) for anyone who doesn't want to be alone this Christmas.

**Fri 23rd:** 8am-8pm

**Sat 24th:** 10am-5pm

**Sun 25th:** 2-7pm (Closed for sexual health services)

**Mon 26th:** Closed – Bank Holiday

**Tue 27th:** Closed – Bank Holiday

**Wed 28th:** 9am-9pm

**Thur 29th:** 9am-9pm (Sexual Health Clinic running as normal)

**Fri 30th:** 8am-8pm

**Sat 31st:** Midday-8pm

**Sun 1st Jan:** Closed – New Year's Day

**Mon 2nd Jan:** Closed – Bank holiday

**Tue 3rd Jan:** Return to usual opening hours

For more information about Birmingham LGBT and its services, call 0121 643 0821 or visit [bigbt.org](http://bigbt.org)

The Birmingham LGBT Centre is located at 38/40 Holloway Circus, Birmingham

and GPs and pharmacies may be closed too. If you see our team out and about across the city, come and help yourself to some free condom packs.

"We'll be checking our Facebook page on the bank holidays, so if you're worried that you may have put yourself at risk of getting any STIs, including HIV, message us and we'll be able to advise you on what to do next."

To find out more about where the sexual health team will be handing out free condoms, follow @GaylifeNStaffs on Twitter or like 'Gaylife Staffordshire' on Facebook.

**HATE  
DOESN'T  
BELONG  
HERE**

- DISABILITY
- RACE
- RELIGION
- SEXUAL ORIENTATION
- TRANSGENDER

**REPORT IT**  
[www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)

**HATE CRIMES  
CAN RECEIVE  
HARSHER SENTENCES.**

STAFFORDSHIRE  
POLICE  
JUSTICE  
Ministry of  
JUSTICE

REPORT IT NOW  
101  
[www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)

# TAKE A TEST UK.COM

The Home Postal Testing Kit you can Trust

Order your \*FREE HIV test kit now!

Sexual Health postal kits now available

\*Free postal H-V Tests to Birmingham postcodes  
\*\*Use voucher code CF0716 for FREE HIV TESTS for non-Birmingham postcodes (valid for a limited period)  
- supported by Saving Lives (Charity no: 1144855)



Heart of England NHS

# Sexual Health Clinic for Trans People

## Clinic Trans

4th Friday every month, 4pm - 7pm  
at Birmingham LGBT Centre

Next Clinic Dates

 Birmingham LGBT

Supported by  umbrella

Call: 0121 643 0821

[www.bglbt.org.uk](http://www.bglbt.org.uk)

[www.bglbt.org.sexual-health](http://www.bglbt.org.sexual-health)



# TRUMP TIMES

## WHAT DOES DONALD TRUMP'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VICTORY MEAN FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY?

As those who believe he's a racist would point out, Donald Trump doesn't seem to be a man with any great liking for colour.

So we maybe shouldn't be surprised that he seems less than enamoured with the rainbow flag and all that it stands for.

Last month saw the American people give the billionaire businessman their seal of approval by voting him into the White House as the country's 45th president.

It remains to be seen whether the Republican drum-banging that celebrated his win over Hillary Clinton was simultaneously sounding a death knell for the hard-fought rights of LGBT citizens.

LGBTs are just one of numerous communities the 70-year-old president-elect chose to abuse and insult during the course of his vitriolic election campaign. He also poured scorn on Muslims and Mexicans, women and the disabled. True, he did get 'up close and personal' with a rainbow flag at a Colorado rally. However, as reassuring messages go, that one has about as much chance as an ice cube in a bonfire of doing anything to settle the jangling nerves of the gay community.

And as if Trump on his own isn't bad enough, his vice-president, Mike Pence, is so experienced at supporting anti-gay measures that he could probably do so even in his sleep.

The picture's not a pretty one. Indeed, there's every chance that America's LGBT community is currently facing the biggest threat to its well-being since the devastation caused by the arrival of the HIV virus.

So what exactly should our cousins across the pond be concerned about?

Well, for starters, there's the US's Marriage Equality Act, which the three-times-married billionaire says he will consider overturning.

Then there's the issue of transgender rights, with Trump opposing Obama's push for transgender students to be allowed to use restrooms which matched their gender identity.

His stance on immigration is worrying too. In seeking to ban Muslims from entering the country - one of his most highly publicised campaign pledges - he could by extension be turning his back on LGBT asylum seekers fleeing their own countries in fear of their lives.

And it doesn't end there. Mike Pence, who Trump has promised will become one of the most influential and powerful vice-presidents



in modern American history, hasn't been shy of publicly supporting conversion therapy. Indeed, he once urged Congress to reallocate money from organisations that encouraged HIV-spreading behaviours, giving it instead to institutions which assisted gay people in amending their sexual behaviour.

Yes folks, the times they are most certainly a-changing. It was hard to believe that anything could come along which would outflank Brexit with regard to great political shocks of 2016, but Donald Trump's election to the most powerful office in the world has definitely, er trumped it.

We must all hope against hope that when he is inaugurated on the 20th of January, the star-spangled banner isn't the only flag to which he'll be happy to pledge his allegiance.



# The Loft



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143 BROMSGROVE STREET BIRMINGHAM - 0121 622 2444





# Matt Eason

**Manager**  
Glamorous, Birmingham

**Born:** Oxford  
**Star sign:** Aquarius  
**Age:** 29

## About Matt

### Where did you grow up?

I've moved all over, but my home town is Chippenham in Wiltshire

### Single or attached?

Attached.

### What makes you happy?

Watching some good crime dramas on TV, such as NCIS and Criminal Minds (nerd!)

### What makes you sad?

Apparently I suffer from 'resting bitch face syndrome', so everything supposedly!

### What makes you angry?

Bad drivers. I get very vocal in the car when I find one! Cut me up and I'll get up your a\*\*\* and beep you so hard!

### If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

To be thinner! I've been paying for gym membership for six months and have only been twice!

### What's been the most embarrassing thing you've done in your life?

Falling over in public! It happened in the DJ box a couple of weeks ago when I decided to sit on a stool. I got a microphone lead wrapped round my leg as I tried to get up!

### Would you consider getting married?

Yeah, I think so. When the time is right, of course

## Coming Out

### When did you first know you were gay?

When I was 14, I think. I had a

feeling earlier than that, but I brushed it off before actually acknowledging it to myself

### When did you come out?

When I was 15. I'd have been in Year 10 at school

### What was school like for you as a gay teenager?

It wasn't bad. I went to Malmesbury school, and there are quite a lot of students there. When I came out, it was 2003 and I actually don't have any horror stories. I did get pulled into the staff room once, though, after two of my teachers had heard rumours. They asked if I'd been bullied, but all I'd ever had were a few name-calls from younger students, so I didn't fare too badly.

### Who was the first person you told, and what was their reaction?

My friends Jo and Steve. Neither of them were fussed by it, which made it easier to deal with when the rest of the school found out

### What would you say to a youngster trying to come to terms with their sexuality?

Just be strong and don't let bullies bother you. If you show them you're bothered, they'll just hassle you more

### Have you ever had any experiences with the opposite sex?

Nope. The furthest I've gone with a girl is smogging, during a game of 'truth or dare' when I was 14, and I was sick in front of her!

## Your Career

### How long have you been running Glamorous?

Since November last year

### What made you want to run a bar on the gay scene?

I used to work there years ago and was sad to see it close. I saw some potential, went for it with my friend Sam, and it hasn't been a bad decision at all!

### What have you got planned for Glamorous over the next twelve months?

A slight rebrand, removing the 'cabaret bar' tagline and replacing it with the word 'Birmingham'. We originally envisaged putting cabaret back on, just like in the old days, but there's already so much cabaret choice across the bars in the gay village. Customer feedback told us this, so instead we focus on the music. We're also looking at moving the bar location inside, to create more space. It's an exciting idea, and one which we're looking to complete some time this coming year.

### What's the biggest challenge you face in running Glamorous?

Initially it took us a while to get word out there that the bar was open again. It had been closed for 15 months prior to us reopening it. As the people who go out regularly are creatures of habit, it proved a harder task than you might think persuading them to break from their new routines and pay us a visit.

### How rewarding do you find it running Glamorous?

It's very rewarding being able to offer another late-night safe place for people in the gay village to visit every night.

### Where do you see Glamorous in the next five years?

I see it still standing! I say that because a lot of people were sceptical about whether the venue would work when we reopened it, as it'd had a rocky past. I'm glad to say we're still here one year on and have proved them wrong. Roll on the next five years!

### Before Glamorous, what did you do for a living?

I ran a couple of other venues, but before that, I used to work in a call centre for Virgin.

### When you were younger, what did you want to be?

At school, I always wanted to do something with IT or be in an orchestra (nerd side coming out again!)

### What was your first job after leaving school?

I worked for Safeway (now Morrisons) as a checkout chick!

### We've all got a dream job - what's yours?

Other than what I do now, I'd actually love to be a forensic nerd at a gruesome crime scene. I'm never put off by blood, sick or gross things. Maybe that's why I always get the job of picking things up off the floor in Glamorous' toilets!

## Gay Scene

### How long have you been frequenting the Midlands gay scene?

Since about 2008. Back in the old Glamorous days, when Route 2 was the place to be on a Monday night and The Village Inn was a hotel/B&B!

### What's been your fondest memory of the scene?

Going out every night in my early 20s without any worries about getting hammered all the time!

### Who's your favourite cabaret act on the scene?

In the Midlands it would be a toss up between Miss Penny, as she was one of the first acts I met - I even lived with her for nearly a year! - and Marty, who I used to work with at Glamorous when she did her Tuesday party night. Internationally I'd say Roxie Corazon (Bendom) - she's just fabulous!

### Who's your favourite person on the scene?

Well, this is a hard one to answer, as so many people have been helpful since we opened Glamorous. All the venue owners and managers have been really good to us, offering advice, help, anything we need. Jon, who was previously at The Nightingale, Dan

and Gabe at The Village and Richard at The Jester, to name but a few.

#### **What do you most enjoy about the gay scene?**

I love how diverse it is and the choice available to the clientele. There's literally something for everyone. Pride is also amazing.

#### **What have you noticed about the way the scene's changed over the years?**

A lot of venues have improved and revamped to a really high standard. Compared to 2008, we see Pride getting busier and better every year. I'm glad to be a part of it now.

#### **How would you change the gay scene?**

I don't think much needs changing, but I did hear a rumour that some venue owners think the main part of Hurst Street should be pedestrianised, from M'sing to The Village. This could be a pretty cool idea.

## **Time Out**

#### **Where do you like to go on a night out?**

Benidorm's gay scene is great fun! Small and unique but a really good night out if you ever visit.

#### **What do you do to relax?**

Go for a drive, play some old games on the PC.

#### **What do you enjoy on telly?**

CSI, NCIS (all three of them), Criminal Minds - crime dramas.

#### **What was the last album or track you bought?**

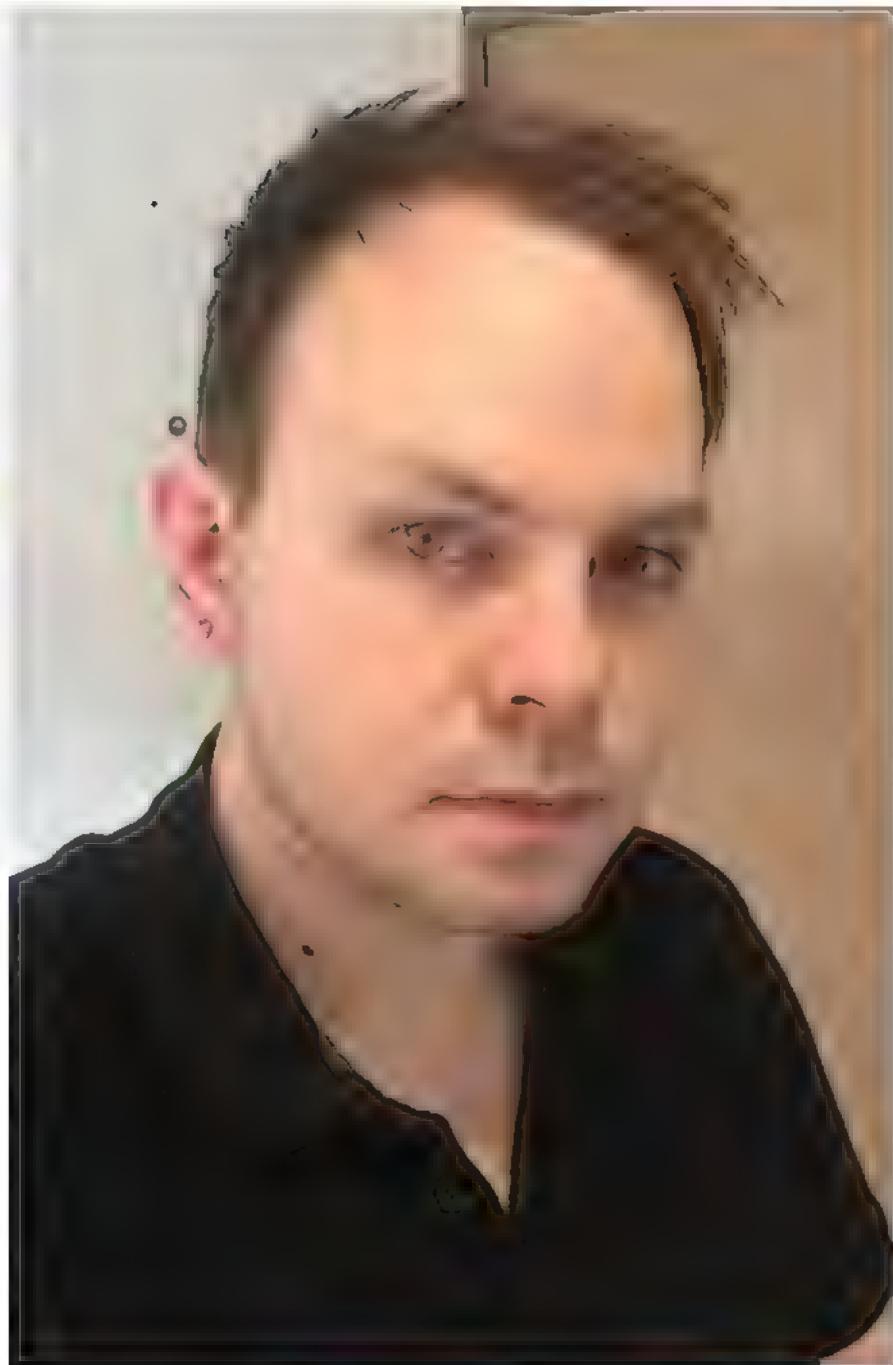
Corinne Bailey Rae. I was driving and needed some chill-out music.

#### **Which one website do you spend the most time on?**

Poorly Drawn Lines - the comics are hilarious!

#### **Which type of holiday do you prefer?**

Benidorm. Most gay people say Gran Canaria, but Benidorm is a nice place to go. Pride there in September was amazing. Sensations, Destiny or DYMK for a boogie - they'll look after you. It's not as touristy as the TV show makes it out to be.



## **Quickfire**

#### **Who's your favourite actor?**

Mark Harmon

#### **What's your favourite book?**

Favourite what? I not really a reading guy

#### **Half empty or half full?**

Half full.

#### **What's your favourite food?**

Chinese.

#### **And how about your favourite drink?**

WKD Red

#### **Madonna or Lady Gaga?**

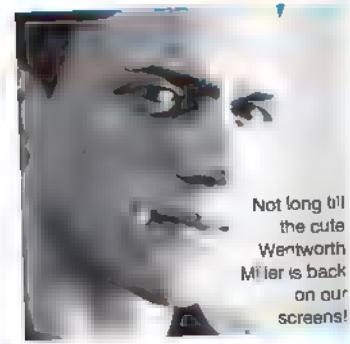
Lady Gaga.

#### **If you could take a selfie with one person, alive or dead, who would it be?**

Beyoncé.

# THE VIRAL ROUND UP

## HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING AT ONLINE...



We all do it - spend hours on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Often, we're distracted from what we should be doing by cat videos and funny pranks - or by something feelgood that's been shared so much on the net it's officially classed as 'viral'. Well, here are some of Midlands Zone's favourites from the past month!

### Sainsbury's support and feature **SAME-SEX FAMILY** in 2016 Christmas advert

Supermarket giant Sainsbury's have shown their support for same-sex families in their 2016 Christmas advert.

The advert features a father struggling to find the time to shop for Christmas presents for his family. Working in a toy factory, he discovers that the greatest gift he could give them is more quality time, so has the idea of building clones of himself.

Towards the end of the advert, a same-sex couple and their baby are featured - reinforcing the Sainsbury's message that Christmas should be spent with family.

You can watch the three-minute-long advert here:



### WARWICK ROWERS release new naked calendar for 2017, supporting equality in sport

The Warwick Rowers are back with an all-new charity calendar for 2017 - and they're as naked as ever!

It's the seventh time the rowers have got their kits off for a calendar, and are raising money for equality in sport via their own charity, Sport Allies.

The calendar obviously features some red-hot pictures - and the fellas have released a pretty smoking trailer for it too.

Watch it here  
[youtu.be/UQVjHpQ7xO8](https://youtu.be/UQVjHpQ7xO8)





## Get Active this Winter

Your local LGBT sports clubs, groups and

activities are here to keep you active this

Winter.

Table Tennis or Badminton, Swimming or  
Pilates, Rugby or Ballroom Dancing, Yoga  
or Zumba, there's something for everyone  
and something for everyone.

Click on Services, then Fitness at  
[www.birminghamlgbt.org.uk](http://www.birminghamlgbt.org.uk)



# GET ACTIVE!

BIRMINGHAM LGBT'S DAVID VINEY SUGGESTS SOME GREAT WAYS TO GET ACTIVE AND IMPROVE YOUR FITNESS THIS CHRISTMAS AND BEYOND...



Picture by Nick Hyman

Christmas can be a stressful time for many, whether it's because of work, not knowing what to buy loved ones, or perhaps on account of spending too much time with the dreaded in-laws! Here, David Viney, Birmingham LGBT's Health & Wellbeing Manager, explains how to de-stress by staying active...

Virtually any form of exercise, from aerobics to yoga, can act as a stress reliever. Also, being physically active and less sedentary is important for good health, both physical and mental. But do you know just how important it is and why?

With recent evidence suggesting that gay and bisexual men are less likely to be engaged in regular physical activity, it begs the questions, "How could I be more active?" and "How have we, as a community, responded to this issue?" - but we'll come to that later.

## "Why we are less active as a community?"

There are common reasons for inactivity that cut across society. These include perceived lack of time, injuries, illness and mobility issues, a lack of interest or motivation, and

availability or accessibility of facilities. Add in the extra barriers faced by gay and bisexual men wishing to take part in mainstream sports or group activity (Out For Sport), and we face a set of interrelated factors that cause us to be more inactive as a community than our heterosexual peers.

## "But I feel okay, so do I really need to?"

In short, YES! According to the World Health Organisation, after smoking, physical inactivity is the most important factor you can change to lower your risk of chronic diseases, including some cancers. A sedentary lifestyle can double the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity. It also increases the risk of colon cancer, high blood pressure, depression and anxiety.

Research shows more physical activity can improve your health and wellbeing in the following ways

- Control your weight
- Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduce your risk of some cancers.

- Strengthen your bones and muscles.
- Improve your mental health and mood
- Help manage stress

### What can I do as an individual?

The NHS guidelines for physical activity state that adults aged 19 to 64 should try to be active daily and should do

- At least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, such as cycling or fast walking, every week (about 20 minutes a day)
- Strength exercises on two or more days a week that work all the major muscles (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms)

That sounds a lot - so what could that mean practically if you haven't exercised in a while, or indeed ever? 'Physical activity' doesn't mean just structured exercise, nor does it need to be grueling. Any activity that works the major muscle groups, such as walking, gardening - even cleaning your home - is usually demanding enough to offer benefits.

Any physical activity is better than no physical activity. The simple ideas below, to build up your stamina and energy levels, can easily be woven into everyday life

#### Take the stairs

It really is an easy one if you're mobile enough. Climbing stairs is one of the best exercises - and it's free. To get started, if you have to go up one or two floors, take the stairs. Likewise if you have to go down three floors or fewer.

Squeeze in short, brisk walks throughout the day.

If you don't have time for a full workout, don't worry. Short bursts of activity, such as 10 minutes of brisk walking spaced throughout the day, offer benefits too.

#### Get up earlier

If you're struggling for time due to a hectic work or social life, get up 30 minutes earlier twice a week to exercise. Once you've adjusted to early-morning workouts, add another day or two to the routine.

#### Commute using active and public transport

Birmingham has a great and evolving cycle network, including the city's canals. Why not use it or get the bus, tram or train, even just a few times a week? You can even do some discreet stretches while you wait for the bus.

#### Drive less, walk more

Park a few streets away and walk to your destination.

#### Change the focus of your regular social activity

Your weekly Saturday coffee with your mates could become your weekly walk, bike ride or swim (and coffee!)

#### Join a community sports group

Birmingham has a great array of LGBT sports clubs for participants at all levels of ability including beginners. They also offer great social interaction, so are a real win-win option

#### What If I experience physical mobility issues?

Health issues that make activity and movement difficult, such as obesity, back pain or persistent fatigue, are a common barrier to regular participation in physical activity. Find an activity that doesn't make you feel uncomfortable. Swimming and other forms of water activity, for example, are excellent if your mobility is impaired.

#### How has the LGBT community responded to this issue?

We're responding by providing safe spaces in which to participate in physical activity as evidenced by the wealth of LGBT sports groups and clubs up and down the UK. They have the added value of being great social spaces, so are also good for our general feeling of well-being, connecting us with our community and peers. It's all too easy to see an issue in the community, such as higher rates of physical inactivity, as a problem to be solved by external agencies. However, by harnessing the skills, energy and passion in our community, we can often be part of the solution to these complex problems.

#### So what can you do?

Join in! Support Birmingham's thriving sports clubs and walking groups - Birmingham Bulis RFC, Birmingham Blaze FC, Birmingham Swifts, Moseley Shoals, TAGS, Birmingham Bluefins and Midlands Out Badminton or Rainbow Rambles, Bootwomen and GOC.

Take part in the Activate classes programme at the LGBT Centre, or join groups like Outdoor Lads for country-based activity such as camping and rock climbing.

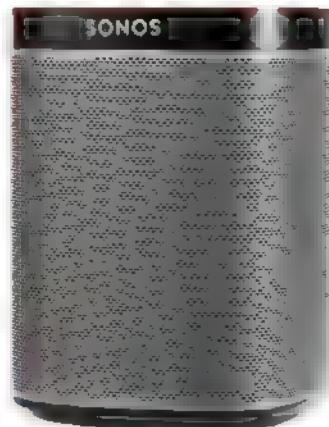
None of that for you? Then why not start your own activity? It could be as simple as using an internet tool such as Meet Up to organise an LGBT kickabout in the park, or a social walk. It's not as complicated as it sounds. Various new clubs and events have flourished recently, such as Rainbow Rambles, Swifts, table tennis, hula hooping and tennis. If you fancy something, just give it a go! There's advice on offer to help you through the set-up process. After all, you've nothing to lose and everything to gain.

#### Finally...

It's important to remember that being physically active, at a level that works for you, should be part of an overall approach to improving and/or maintaining your health and well-being.

For more information about Health & Wellbeing services provided by Birmingham LGBT, visit [bglbt.org](http://bglbt.org)

# ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS...



'Tis the season to be jolly - but one of the most stressful aspects of Christmas is finding those perfect presents for your friends and family. Here are some of our favourite gifts - and hey, you might even spot something you fancy buying for yourself!

## 01 Amazon Echo

Amazon Echo is a hands-free speaker you control with your voice. Echo connects to the Alexa Voice Service to play music, provide information, news, sports scores, weather and more.

£149.99

[amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

sheer joy of their sound.

£239.00

[beoplay.com](http://beoplay.com)

## 02 B&O BeoPlay H6 Headphones

The second generation of the BeoPlay H6 are the best portable headphones on the market today. They look beautiful, with leather-clad ear pads, aluminium construction and striking Scandinavian style, but what really sets them apart is the dynamism and

## 03 Sonos PLAY:1 Smart Speaker

Whether it's used as a single speaker on a desk or a house-spanning Sonos set, the Play:1 is a great option for anybody who wants to get started with wireless speakers. Oh, and it sounds great too.

£169.00

[sonos.com](http://sonos.com)

## 04 Dyson Supersonic Hair Dryer

Dyson's bladeless fans are a futuristic way to cool down a room. The Dyson Supersonic adds that same high-tech bladeless technology to your hair dryer.

£399.00

[currys.co.uk](http://currys.co.uk)

## 05 BenQ HT2050 Projector

For your next movie night, try a projector. The BenQ HT2050 takes up much less space than a regular TV, is easily portable and can make an absolutely massive 180-inch screen.

£699.00

[benq.com](http://benq.com)

## 06 Lenovo Yoga Book

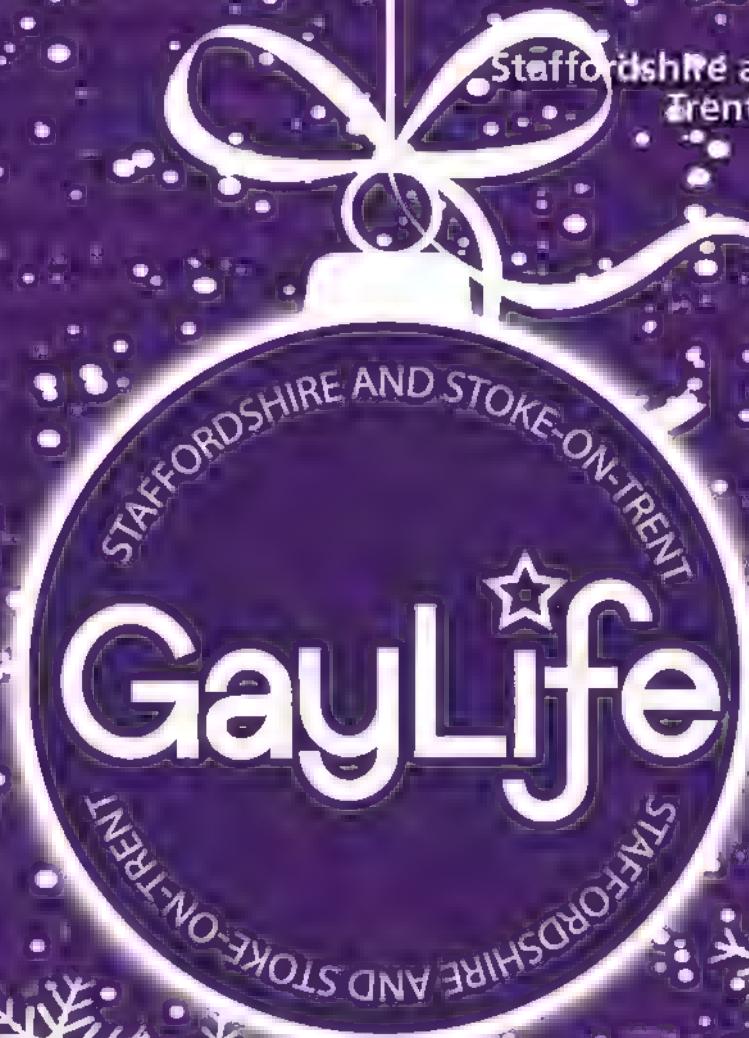
The Lenovo Yoga Book is a new type of tablet computer, complete with a touch-sensitive keyboard panel that you can write on with a stylus, or even digitise notes taken with pen and paper.

£494.95

[johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)

NHS

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership  
NHS Trust



Season's Greetings  
from Team Gaylife



1



2



3



4



5



6

#### 01 The Emoji Game

The aim of the Emoji Card Game is to be the first player to collect a suite of emojis before your rivals - but things are not as straightforward as they seem... Action cards designed to either enhance or diminish your chances of winning need to be acted upon, resulting in hilarious consequences.

£8.00

[boots.com](http://boots.com)

#### 02 Braun Series 5 5040 Wet & Dry Electric Shaver

Braun Series 5 Wet & Dry 5040 Electric Shaver is equipped with a unique combination of power and precision for un-

compromising performance without sacrificing on skin comfort.

£189.99  
[braun.com](http://braun.com)

#### 03 Jack Wills Enamel Water Bottle

This stylish Jack Wills Water Bottle is a great Christmas gift for any active person. Perfect to take to the gym, to work or on your adventures.

£8.00  
[jackwills.com](http://jackwills.com)

#### 04 Krups Nespresso Inissia White Coffee Pod Machine

All of Nespresso's coffee-making expertise is packed into this smart little

number from Krups. For perfect espressos with the full body and intensity that Nespresso lovers expect, this sleek machine is the essence of great coffee.

£100.00  
[lakeland.co.uk](http://lakeland.co.uk)

#### 05 Cognito Classic Smartwatch

Stay connected on the move with the Cognito Classic Smartwatch, which delivers smartphone notifications to ensure that you never miss important calls or messages.

The Cognito Classic brings together smartwatch convenience and classic analogue style, combining an ana-

logue clock face with a modern digital display.

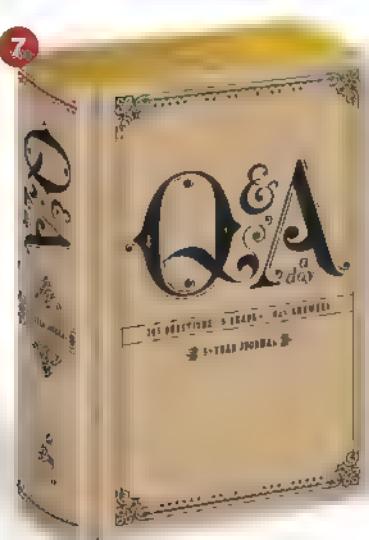
Get alerts straight from your phone to your watch, including incoming calls, text messages, email and social media notifications.

£74.99  
[currys.co.uk](http://currys.co.uk)

#### 06 Nintendo Classic Mini

Rediscover your favourite '80s videogames in HD! Each title for the Nintendo Classic Mini is displayed at a smooth 60Hz and can be enjoyed in one of three visual modes.

£138.00  
[amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



**07 Q&A-a-Day Five-Year Journal**  
The Q&A-a-Day Journal shows you what was going through your head each day for five years of your life. Simply turn to today's date, answer the question at the top of the page, and when you finish the journal, start over. As you return to the daily questions over the years, you'll notice how your answers change (or don't)!

£13.79

[amazon.co.uk](#)

tens of thousands of people and features many a high-profile artist across the May Spring Bank Holiday weekend.

From £12.50

[birminghampride.com](#)

**09 Fitbit Alta In Black/22K Gold Plated**

This Fitbit automatically tracks how long and well you've slept, as well as monitoring steps, distance, calories burned and active minutes.

£129.99

[fitbit.com](#)



**10 GoPro HERO5 Black**

HERO5 Black is the most powerful and easy-to-use GoPro ever, thanks to its 4K video, voice control, one-button simplicity, touch display and waterproof design.

£349.99

[gopro.com](#)

**11 Reiss Tower Plaited Leather Belt**

Add a subtle textured edge to your ensembles with this Tower belt from Reiss. Crafted from pure leather in a distinctive plaited construction, it features a lustrous metallic buckle for a polished finish.

£50.00 [johnlewis.com](#)



**12 Hatchimals**

This year's must-have toy, Hatchimals are magical creatures that live inside eggs. Each egg contains one of two interactive Hatchimals. As you love and care for your egg, its eyes will light up and it will make cute sounds, telling you how it's feeling!

£59.99

[toysrus.co.uk](#)

**08 Birmingham Pride Tickets**

Get your hands on Birmingham Pride tickets whilst they're at a discounted rate. The annual LGBT event attracts



**CAM4.co.uk**

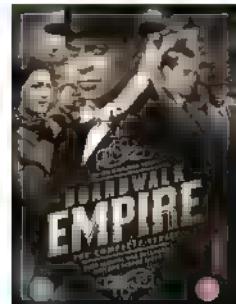
Our Performers  
have a package  
with your  
name on it  
this xmas!



THE WORLD'S LARGEST ADULT WEBCAM SITE



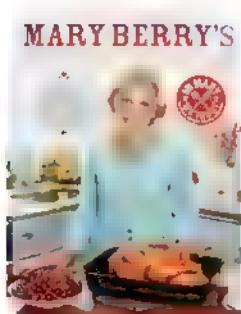
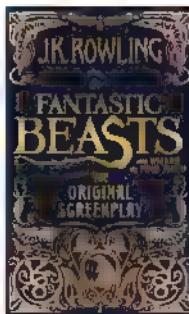
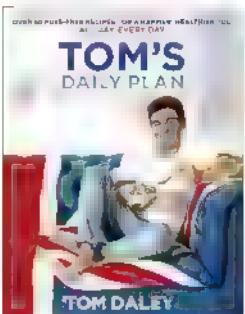
# DVD BOX SETS



# CALENDARS



# BOOKS



DVDs, from left to right

The Newsroom Series 1-3  
£22.39 [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Game of Thrones Series 1-8  
£69.99 [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Orange Is the New Black Series 1-2  
£42.99 [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Orphan Black Series 1-2  
£18.00 [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Boardwalk Empire Series 1-5  
£23.49 [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Calendars, from left to right

Ben Cohen 2017  
The hot ex-rugby player's brand new calendar  
£17.99 [bencohencalendar.com](http://bencohencalendar.com)

Red Hot 2017  
If you're a fan of red-headed men, this is the calendar for you.  
£32.99 [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Bel Ami Online 2017  
Each month features a hot couple, including stars such as Mick Jagger, Jack Palance, Kris Evans, Kevin Warhol, Adam Archuleta and many, many more!  
£17.99 [prowler.co.uk](http://prowler.co.uk)

Dieux Du Stade 2017

Dieux Du Stade are back again and hotter than ever. Start 2017 the right way!

£29.95 [prowler.co.uk](http://prowler.co.uk)

Warwick Rowers 2017

The ever-naked Warwick Rowers return with their latest smoking-hot charity-fundraising calendar

£14.99 [warwickrowers.com](http://warwickrowers.com)

Books, from left to right

Guinness World Records 2016  
Guinness World Records  
£10.00 [whsmith.co.uk](http://whsmith.co.uk)

Tom's Daily Plan  
Tom Daley  
£8.50 [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Planet Earth II  
Stephen Moss  
£17.00 [whsmith.co.uk](http://whsmith.co.uk)

Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them: The Original Screenplay  
JK Rowling  
£8.49 [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Mary Berry's Christmas Collection  
Mary Berry  
£8.00 [whsmith.co.uk](http://whsmith.co.uk)



# CHRISTMAS JUMPERS

to get you in the festive spirit...



01 Brown Reindeer Face Christmas Jumper

£30.00  
[topman.com](http://topman.com)

02 White Faded Snowflake Print Sweatshirt

£25.00  
[riversland.com](http://riversland.com)

03 Bulldog Novelty Light Up Jumper

[marksandspencer.com](http://marksandspencer.com)

04 Scotch & Soda Fair Isle Crew Neck Jumper

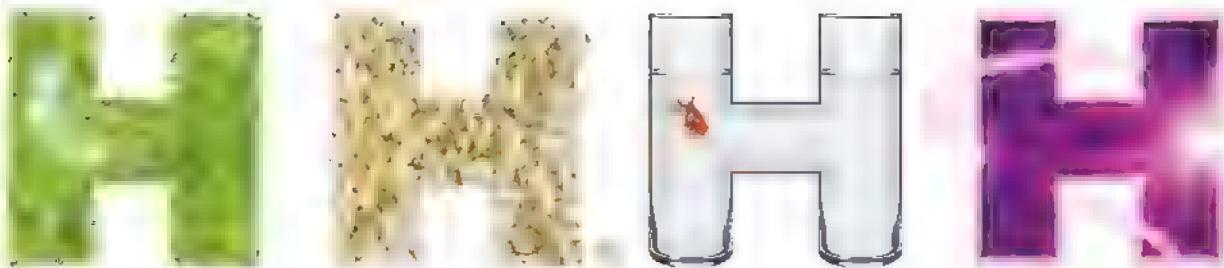
£140.00  
[johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)

05 Grey Bulldog Bah Humbug! Christmas Jumper

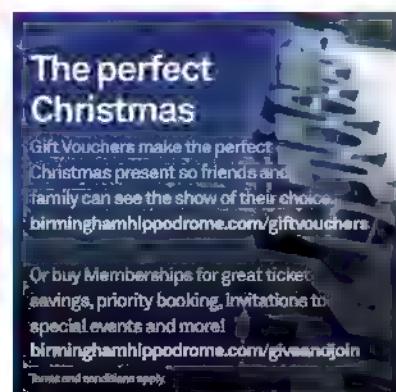
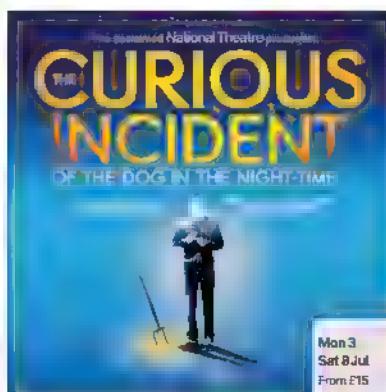
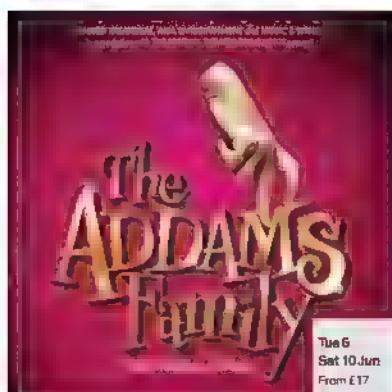
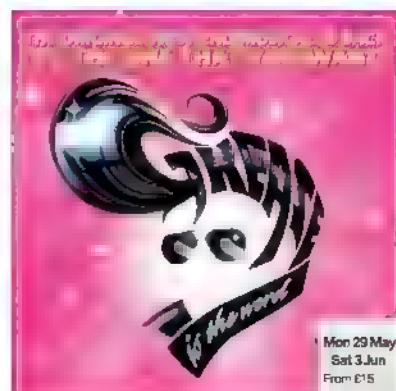
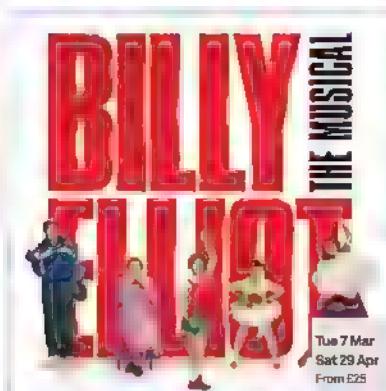
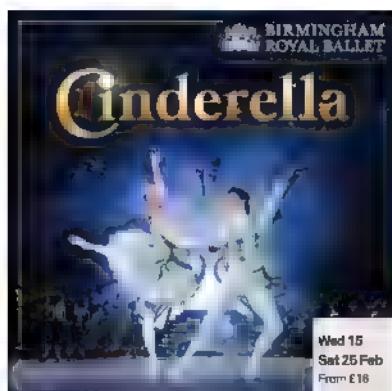
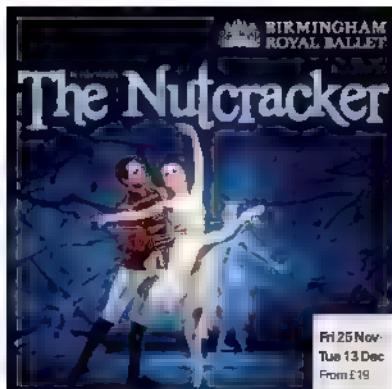
[riverisland.com](http://riverisland.com)

06 I Came To Sleigh Christmas Jumper

[topman.com](http://topman.com)



## BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME



**H** BIRMINGHAM  
HIPPODROME

0844 338 5000 [birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com)

Calls cost 4.5p per min plus access charge. 5% transaction charge applies excluding cash sales in person.

[birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com)



# Seasonal scents

The perfect gifts for Christmas...

**01 Jean Paul Gaultier  
Le Male Essence**

Le Male Essence provides a new olfactory sensation. A burst of spicy citrus collides with sensual leather notes, shaken up with precious woods.

£48.50  
[boots.com](http://boots.com)

**02 Hugo Boss The  
Scent**

A seductive fragrance with an arousing blend of essences.

£45.00  
[theperfumeshop.com](http://theperfumeshop.com)

**£45.00  
[boots.com](http://boots.com)**

**04 Diesel Bad**

A daring and sophisticated olfactory signature, Diesel BAD is the first scent combining accords of tobacco and caviar, creating an addictive, pulsating yet fresh woodiness.

£39.50  
[theperfumeshop.com](http://theperfumeshop.com)

**05 Issey Miyake L'Eau  
d'Issey Pour Homme**

L'Eau d'Issey Pour Homme is a fresh, vibrant and elegant Eau de Toilette. A timeless fragrance with a very masculine signature. This innovative spicy and woody citrus fragrance has earned a faithful following.

£31.50  
[theperfumeshop.com](http://theperfumeshop.com)

[boots.com](http://boots.com)

**06 Chanel Bleu de  
Chanel**

A tribute to masculine freedom in an aromatic woody fragrance with a captivating trail.

Timeless and anti-conformist, it's housed in an enigmatic blue bottle  
£48.00  
[theperfumeshop.com](http://theperfumeshop.com)

**07 Tom Ford Noir  
Extreme**

An amber-drenched woody oriental fragrance with a tantalising and delectable heart.

£70.00  
[boots.com](http://boots.com)

# That's Entertainment!

This month's hot DVD, music and book releases...



## DVD ONE KISS

Antonio may be a star basketball player on his high-school team, but that doesn't mean he's popular. Softly spoken, awkward and still grieving following the death of his older brother, he's excluded by his teammates and considered dumb. Blu, who has a reputation for her sexual exploits, defiantly rides her scooter past graffiti labelling her a 'slut'. She hurries to the mailbox each afternoon to grab her writer mother's rejection letters before she sees them. Lorenzo, new in town as well as newly adopted, relies on his extravagant sense of fashion and elaborate imagination to distract him from the bullies at school, who mercilessly tease him about his homosexuality. The three teenagers form a friendship, hoping that strength in numbers will offer protection against the bullies - but their alliance comes at a tragic price... Reminiscent of 1960s New Wave forerunners like Truffaut's *Jules et Jim* and Godard's *Bande à part*, *One Kiss* is a story of outsider friendship, the limits of the imagination and the consequence of honesty.

## BOOK THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF

by Mentaiko Ito

Mentaiko Ito is Japan's Gay Manga darling. Bruno Gmünder here publishes his works for the first time in English, introducing him to an international audience. His newest manga, *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, is funny, sexy and cute, containing the stories *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, *Holy Night* and *Swift As Lightning*. Critically acclaimed for its panel sequences and page layout, this volume is a must-have for all fans of Japanese manga culture.



## DVD SHARED ROOMS

*Shared Rooms* explores the meaning of home and family through three inter-related stories about gay men finding connections during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day...

A married couple take in a teenage relative who was kicked out of his home after his parents discovered he was gay...

A pair of roommates are forced to share a bed for the week, much to the delight (and horror) of the one who's harbouring a secret crush on the other...

Two men looking for a quick hookup end up finding a much stronger connection...



## MUSIC KYLIE CHRISTMAS

by Kylie Minogue

Kylie's Snow Queen Christmas release was recorded at Angel Studios and Sarm Music Village. The deluxe edition features 16 tracks, including several duets and a mix of original and classic songs. Guest performers include her sister Dannii, Frank Sinatra, James Corden and Iggy Pop.

BGSO

Birmingham Gay  
Symphony Orchestra

A MAGICAL  
CHRISTMAS  
CONCERT

TCHAIKOVSKY'S  
**SLEEPING  
BEAUTY**  
& CHRISTMAS FAVOURITES

**TICKETS**

£10 / £8 in advance

£12 / £10 on the door

£30 Family ticket

£5 Students

Saturday 17 December 3pm

St Pauls Church, Birmingham, B3 1QZ

BGSO is Resident Orchestra at St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter

Book now at [bgso.org.uk](http://bgso.org.uk)

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**ZONE**

# Hotlist

**THIS MONTH'S HOT EVENTS & THINGS TO SEE AND DO****1****CHRISTMAS QUEENS****O2 Institute, Birmingham,  
Wed 7 December**

The stars of RuPaul's Drag Race return to the UK in support of their latest release, *Christmas Queens Vol 2*. This festive drag treat is set to feature performances from fan-favourite queens Alaska, Katya, Detox, Phi Phi O'Hara and Manila Luzon.

The Christmas cabaret extravaganza is hosted by everyone's favourite RuPaul judge, Michele Visage.

**2 DICK WHITTINGTON****Birmingham Hippodrome,  
Mon 19 December - Sun 29  
January**

Gay Doctor Who and Torchwood star John Barrowman will be hoping the streets of the second city are paved with gold this Christmas, when he takes the title role in Birmingham Hippodrome's pantomime production of *Dick Whittington*.

Joining John on stage this year, to star as King Rat, is Steve McFadden, best known as EastEnders bad boy Phil Mitchell.

Support comes from The Krankies (as Councillor and Jimmy Krankie), Hippodrome favourite Matt Slack (as Idle Jack), West End star Jodie Prenger (as Fairy Bow Bells) and popular Midlands panto Dame, Andrew Ryan (as Sarah the Cook).



# Hotlist



# 3

## ALADDIN

Wolverhampton Grand, Sat 18 December - Sun 22 January  
The Wolverhampton Grand is certainly on a roll when it comes to providing high-quality pantomime fare, and the annual Christmas 2015 offering looks set to be every bit as energised and enchanting as any of its previous productions.

Charlotte McElroy takes the title role in a show

that sees former *Idol* sensation Doreen lip-synching her panto debut as the Lazy Empress Of China. Parky and Stevew the Rival Stars is the Slave Of The Ring, with CBeebies' Mr Bloom Ben Faulks threatening to feel his collar twice as the Chief of Peking Police. Britain's Got Talent's soprano Lucy Kay appears in the role of Princess Jasmine, while illusionist Stefan Perl plays the evil sorcerer Abanazar.

# 4

## STEPHEN K AMOS

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 3 December

Stephen K Amos returns to Birmingham this month with his latest touring show, *World Famous*, in which he reveals everything he's learned from the cultures of the countries in which he's performed his stand-up routine.

Stephen's popularity both here and abroad are suitable reward for a comedian who sometimes wondered whether his big break would ever come. "I used to do a joke where I said I'd have to wait for Lenny Henry to die before I could get on television," he says, referring to his belief that opportunities for black comedians are few and far between.

Whatever the truth, there's little question that Stephen's very much basking in the televisual limelight these days. His success is no surprise, mind, given the quality of his material and his effortless ability to strike all the right chords with his ever-appreciative audience.



# 5

## SCOTT CAPURRO

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 15 December

Outrageous and outspoken, gay comedian Scott Capurro certainly knows how to provoke a response as hefty numbers of complaints following various television appearances ably testify.

Confident, catty, charismatic and Californian, Scott has no qualms about using material that might offend a significant proportion of an unprepared audience.



# 6

## BIRMINGHAM FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET

**Birmingham City Centre,**  
**Thurs 17 November - Thurs 29 December.**

This is the largest outdoor Christmas market in the country and sits at the centre of Birmingham's festive celebrations

Drawing crowds from across the city and further afield, the markets feature a wide range of traditional handmade toys, art, and items from throughout the world. There's also plenty of food and drink, including German mulled wine, grilled sausages, vegetarian options, pretzels and German beer

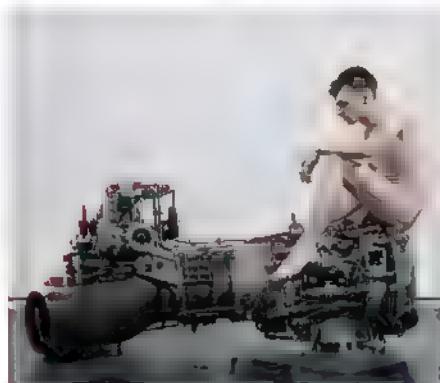
Carol singers, live music and an ornate carousel also feature

# 8

## ROGER HIORNS

**Ikon Gallery, Birmingham,**  
**Wed 7 December - Sun 5 March**

Roger Hiorns transforms materials and readymades in order to focus on various aspects of modern life often through current affairs. His work to date has involved growing vast amounts of copper sulphate crystals on objects ranging from car engines to domestic interiors. He's also created paintings made from brain matter, injected jet engines with anti-depressant drugs to affect a robotic nervous system, and produced a video work in which choristers of Birmingham's St Philip's Cathedral sing Evensong while lying on their backs on the floor of the nave



# 7

## THE PASS

**Starring Russell Tovey, Arinze Kene, Lisa McGrillis, Nico Mirallegro**  
**Directed by Ben A Williams (UK)**

In the age of celebrity and the digital image, one can never be too careful. Something that once happened between two aspiring footballers returns to haunt them years later. Expect some strong gay themes.

**Released Fri 9 December**

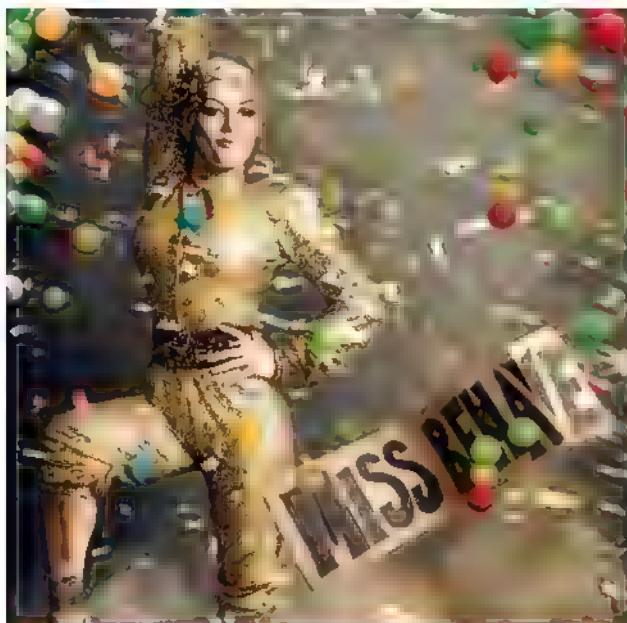
## CLOTHES SHOW

**NEC, Birmingham,**  
**Fri 2 - Tues 6 December**

A hot ticket for fashionistas everywhere, Clothes Show Live regularly attracts a plethora of well-known celebrities from the worlds of music and TV - and this year is no exception.

With appearances by TOWIE's Joey Essex and Made In Chelsea's Binky and Jamie confirmed, 2016 promises to be a bumper show. In addition to showcasing wares from hundreds of leading fashion and beauty brands, the five-day event also features non-stop catwalk shows and live performances by, among others, rising British stars Charlotte OC and Daecolm. Other attractions include Face Of - the annual search for new talent - a Q&A session with blogger Sarah Ashcroft - otherwise known as that Pommie girl - YouTuber Grace Victory discussing why she's a dedicated body-image campaigner, and TV favourite Mark Heyes's Curves With Confidence workshop. Plenty to enjoy at this month's show, then, and definitely one that all Midlands fashion enthusiasts should make an extra-special effort to attend - from next year, the event will be taking place in its new home of Liverpool, as part of British Style Collective





## WIN! A pair of tickets to Cabaret XXL in Birmingham

We've teamed up with the fine folks over at the Birmingham REP to give one lucky reader a pair of tickets to the theatre's Cabaret XXL Christmas Special with Miss Behave on Saturday 17 December

If you'd like to see Miss Behave as you've never seen her before, if you'd like to breathe out and admit everything is NOT okay, if you're a fan of treats from Poundland, if you'd like some delightful acts sprinkled in to ensure it's not all doom and gloom, and if you want a break from the all-encompassing festiveness of it all, then Miss Behave's Mixed Bag Of Merriness is the show for you.

If you'd like to enter our competition and be in with a chance of winning, head to midlandszone.co.uk and answer this question:

**Christmas is usually associated with which well-known Father?**

- A) Father Christmas
- B) Father Ted
- C) Father Brown

To enter this competition, simply visit [midlandszone.co.uk](http://midlandszone.co.uk) before Wednesday 14 December

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WHAT'S ON IN YOUR LOCAL GAY VENUES

# OUT

DECEMBER 2016

## NEW YEAR'S EVE EVENTS GALORE

ACROSS THE  
MIDLANDS  
GAY SCENE

### ORITSE IN WOLVES

The former JLS star leads Wolverhampton's Meet and Greet session.

### ONE FOR THE BOYS

Birmingham's popular XXL club night returns to the city this month!

### THE LOFT RELAUNCH!

Popular Birmingham bar The Loft receives brand new vintage look!



## XXL LONDON

WEDNESDAYS 10PM - 3AM  
SATURDAYS 10PM - 8AM  
PULSE  
No.1 INVICTA PLACE SE1 9UF

[WWW.XXL-LONDON.COM](http://WWW.XXL-LONDON.COM)

## BIRMINGHAM

3RD FRIDAY EVERY MONTH  
9PM - 3AM  
THE CORE  
135 SHERLOCK ST, BIRMINGHAM

[FACEBOOK.COM/XXLLONDON](http://FACEBOOK.COM/XXLLONDON)

## Birmingham gets set for NEW YEAR'S EVE!



New Year's Eve is the biggest night of the year on Birmingham's gay scene.

This year NYE falls on a Saturday - which is great, because you'll have the Sunday to recover and you then get an extra day off on the Monday.

Venues all across the city are gearing up for a spectacular night of partying. Sure to be the busiest night of the year, there's no better

way to see in 2017 than with your mates in the gay village's awesome selection of top-quality venues.

Highlights include a free party with DJ Nikki and DJ Dan at Eden Bar on Sherlock Street and the usual massive NYE party at gay superclub The Nightingale.



## LADY DIAMOND hits Birmingham

Popular Sitges drag queen Lady Diamond is set to appear at Birmingham gay venue Missing Bar on Sunday 4 December as part of her world tour.

She'll also be on hand to officially switch on the venue's Christmas lights at 10pm and will be supported by resident drag artist LaQueefia from 8pm. The whole event will be an opportunity to raise as much money for Positive West Midlands, supporting people living with HIV.

## FRIDAY NIGHT CABARET every week at popular Birmingham bar



If you're out on a Friday night and looking for great cabaret to enjoy, look no further than Birmingham's Village Inn.

Kicking off the venue's December line-up is Kara Van on Friday the 4th. The following week sees Vicky Vivacious and Kara Van Park dropping in, followed by Miss Vicky Jackson as Pink the week after. Friday 16th sees the one and only DE Experience take to the stage, followed by Baga Chipz on the 23rd. And then, as per usual, Sandra is back at the end of the month to see you into January and 2017!

## Former JLS star ORITSÉ to perform new track at popular Wolverhampton gay bar

Former JLS star Oritsé is set to visit the Black Country this month to promote his new single, Waterline.

He'll be stopping off at Wolverhampton's Gorgeous nightclub on Thursday 1 December as part of the city's

Block Party event. Oritsé will also be sticking around for a meet-and-greet with fans - so if you've ever wanted to get up close and personal with him, then this is your chance.



## XXL BIRMINGHAM brings all the boys (and bears) to the yard...

Men-only club night XXL returns to Birmingham this month - and it promises to be as good as ever!

The award-winning club night, taking place on the third Friday of every month (16 December), features resident DJ Paul Morell playing the biggest hits and remixes to

get the dancefloor packed.

Oh, and if you fancy making your night out that little bit hotter, don't forget there's a dark room upstairs!

If you've never been before, then why not check it out this month?





# THE BIGGEST GAY

MONDAY NIGHT IN THE MIDLANDS!



MON 5<sup>TH</sup> DEC  
GLITTER LIPS

MON 12<sup>TH</sup> DEC  
MARTY

MON 19<sup>TH</sup> DEC  
TINA SPARKLE



# Fabulous

PLUS: HAPPY HOUR FROM 10PM // DRINKS FROM £5 ALL NIGHT

C21

18-21 ABBEY FORECAVE, SHREWSBURY, SHROPSHIRE SY2 6AE. TEL: 01743 271821 [WWW.C21SHREWSBURY.CO.UK](http://WWW.C21SHREWSBURY.CO.UK)

December



## BIRMINGHAM

**2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS** - Sunday to Friday - All day & night. Wind down after work with a cocktail or two.

**THE LOFT LOUNGE**

**ALL DAY EVERY DAY PRICES** - DJ Parm, takes over the weekend by playing the best of club classics, house, R&B and all your favourites. Enjoy all day every day prices too!

**SIDEWALK**

**NIGHT OF 1,000 STARS** - **Fri 23 December** - In the Eden Marquee - presented by Asylum.

**BIG GAY FRIDAY** - Party anthems all night long with Missing's Du James. Open until the early hours

**SING STAR SUPERSTAR WITH DISCO & KARAOKE** - with DJ Nikki

**FREAKY FRIDAY** - Big name cabaret at midnight. Open until 6am. **Fri 2 Dec** - Kara Van Park & Vick Vivacious **Fri 9 Dec** - Vicki Jackson as Pink **Fri 16 Dec** - The DE Experience. **Fri 23 Dec** - Beqa Chipz **Fri 30 Dec** - Sandra.

**THE VILLAGE INN**

**INFUSION** - Free Entry. Absolute Anthems and Floor Fillers with DJ Corey. Drinks from £2. £2 entry

**NIGHTMARE CLUB**

**KICK START** - Kick start the weekend from 9pm till the early hours. Hosted by James.

**LBR** - With Charlotte the Harlot. Open until 6am every Friday

**THE VILLAGE INN**

**LIP GLOSS** - **Fri 2 December** - A night for the trans\* community. Admirers and friends. With Miss Penny and DJ Jason Green.

**MIDSBEARS** - **Fri 16 December** - A night for the bear community. Admirers and friends

**OLD SKOOL GARAGE** - The first Friday of the month sees the Nightingale go back in time, playing some of the best in old skool garage. A night not to be missed

**NIGHTMARE CLUB**

**SAATHI** - **Fri 30 December** - Every last Friday monthly. South Asian Gay and Lesbian club night. Bollywood and Bhangra.

**NIGHTMARE CLUB**

**SING STAR SUPERSTAR** - with DJ Nikki every Friday - your chance to win cash

**VINTAGE FRIDAYS** - a night of soul funk, rock, motown. Northern Soul and all the classic favourites

**THE LOFT LOUNGE**

**XXL - Fri 16 December** - Men only night with DJ Paul Morell. Early Bear offers until 11pm. Every 3rd Friday of each month.

**THE CORE CLUB**

## FUNK'D UP

**CLUB CHIC**

**KARAOKE**

**THE FOX**

**RETRO FRIDAY**

**BAR JESTER**

## WEST MIDLANDS

### THANK FUNK IT'S FRIDAY

Gorgeous residents spinning house and classics. 12am - 6am.

**COREDOUS CLUB, WOLVERHAMPTON**

**BANG**

**THE LION, WALSALL**

**TV PARTY NIGHT**

**THE GREENHOUSE, DARLASTON**

**CLUB NIGHT**

**THE THREE FURNACES, TELFORD**

### FREE ENTRY FRIDAYS

**RAINBOWS, COVENTRY**

**FRIDAY SOCIAL**

**THE BELL, STOURBRIDGE**

**WEEKLY CABARET**

**THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON**

**START THE WEEKEND**

**PINK, STOKE ON TRENT**

**TFI FRIDAY**

**BREWERY TAP, WORCESTER**

## EAST MIDLANDS

**PINK POUNDER**

**THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON**

**CLJB NIGHT**

**HELSINKI, LEICESTER**



Mondays DJ MATT & MIKE EMERY

Tuesdays DJ SAM with Old School Hits

Wednesdays DJ MIKE EMERY with House, Dance & RnB

Thursdays DJ AMANDA CRUZ with Camp and Charts

Fridays DJ MATT & MIKE EMERY

Saturdays DJ PAM CATZ

Sundays DJ GAVINA VAGINA

with her night of Comedy, Camp & Show tunes

**HAPPY HOUR  
10PM-2AM**

DOUBLE SPIRIT & MIXER £2.50  
CARLING £3 A PINT  
AND MORE...

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OPEN TIL 6AM

December

3 10 17 24 31

SATURDAY

**BIRMINGHAM**

**80S HITS** - with DJ Dan from 2am It's back to the 80s.

**THE ATTIC** - Available for hire Call the venue for more info - 0121 622 4256  
**MISSING BAR**

**HANNAH WILLIAMS** - Sat 28 November - Live PA from Say You Do and Born Hood No Money house specialist Hannah Williams

**BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT** - Over 2 floors. 3 DJs. Open til 8am. With DJ Lotty & DJ Richard Moon. With DJ Tonic in The Village Underground

**THE VILLAGE INN**

**BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT** - Every Saturday, with loads of drinks promotions

**NIGHTNGALE CLUB**

**CHRISTMAS PARTY - Sat 17 December**

- Join Danny Beard and Lisa Q Jones for Eden Bar's annual Christmas party

**EDEN BAR**

**CULT** - Bringing dirty house back home. Top Floor from 10pm

**NIGHTNGALE CLUB**

**KARAOKE & COCKTAILS** - In The

Athc, plus music from across the decades

**LBR** - With Charlotte the Harlot Open until 8am every Saturday

**THE VILLAGE INN**

**DRAG TRIPLE TREAT - Sat 3**

**December** - A night of cabaret with Danny Beard, Fanny Bums and Brenda LaBeau.

**EDEN BAR**

**NYE - Sat 31 December** - See in 2017 with DJ Nikki & DJ Dan. Free entry

**EDEN BAR**

**SATURDAY SESSIONS** - With DJ Simon Baker from 8pm.

**THE LOFT LOUNGE**

**SATURS-FACTION** - Welcome in the weekend with resident DJ, playing the best of everything.

**SIDEWALK**

**SWAGGERLICIOUS** - Every Saturday night (Room 4)

**NIGHTNGALE CLUB**

**PANIC ON THE STREETS OF**

**BIRMINGHAM - Sat 10 December** - The Smiths disco with special guest Gary Day

**EDEN BAR**

**YOUR DISCO NEEDS YOU** - featuring the biggest remixes, absolute anthems, dance classics, disco,

house and commercial with your host Twiggly!

**EDEN BAR**

**THE BREAKFAST CLUB**

**CLUB CHIC**

**PROSTITUTION & STRIPTEASERS**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR**

**THE CORE CLUB**

**DJ PARTY NIGHT**

**THE FOX**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR**

**BAR JESTER**

**EDEN BAR**

**THE WELLINGTON**

"... in the database"

**THE LION, WALSALL**

**CLUB NIGHT** - Dr. Martens

**THE THREE FURNACES, TELFORD**

**BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT**

**EDEN BAR**

**RAINBOWS, COVENTRY**

**INCLUSION** - Birmingham

**THE BELL, STOURBRIDGE**

**NOT TO MISS** -

**PINK STORE ON TRENT**

**WEEKLY CABARET**

**THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON**

**EAST MIDLANDS**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR**

**BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON**

**CLUB NIGHT**

**EDEN BAR**

**EDEN BAR</**

# The Loft: The popular Birmingham

If you loved the Loft Lounge for it's chic interior before, then prepare to be blown away as the all-new vintage looking Loft sees the venue bring a refreshing change to Birmingham's gay scene.

The Loft, as it is now known, sees plush sofas replaced with industrial inspired tables and chairs, low lighting and antique doors.

It's all change in the popular venue's garden too. You'd be fooled to thinking you're still inside with its unique heated outside area, large seating areas and characteristic furniture.

With the redecoration comes a whole new menu, craft beers and signature cocktail menu. Be sure to check it out - it truly is a great place to be.



More great photos on [facebook](#)

[facebook.com/midlandszone.co.uk](http://facebook.com/midlandszone.co.uk)



# bar gets a vintage new look!



# The Loft amazes customers at venue launch party

## REACTIONS TO THE NEW LOOK

There weren't just positive reactions at the launch party, but loads of you commented about The Loft's new look on our Facebook Page too - here's some of your thoughts...

"Love the new look! Looks more like a trendy Loft Rooftop Bar now as its namesake states. Rather than a plush kitsch Boudoir Can't wait to check it out. Well done to the Team!"

*Dominic Joseph,  
Birmingham*



"It's nice, but the plushness has gone. I do like the Auntie Em farm style garden."

*Lee Overton,  
Birmingham*

"Looks amazing!"



*Kamg Martin,  
Leicester*

"We always loved The Loft Lounge when we visited Birmingham, it was always so welcoming. Let's hope it still the same"

*Graham Kent,  
Birmingham*

Pictures by Jas Sansi



# XXL: Birmingham's great men-only club night



[More pictures on our Facebook page](#)

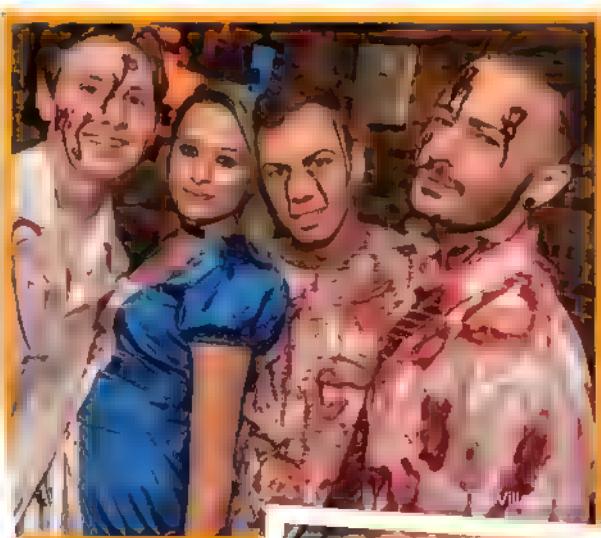


# Halloween in Brum: A Nightmare on Hurst Street

The Loft Lounge



The Fightingale



Eden



The Fightingale



The Loft Lounge



M



Fightingale

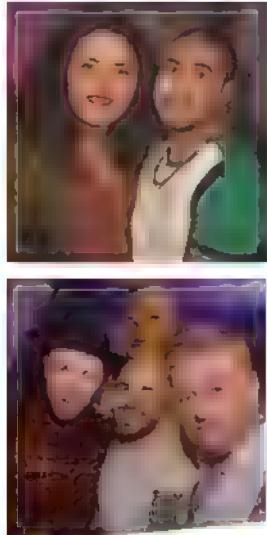


The Loft Lounge





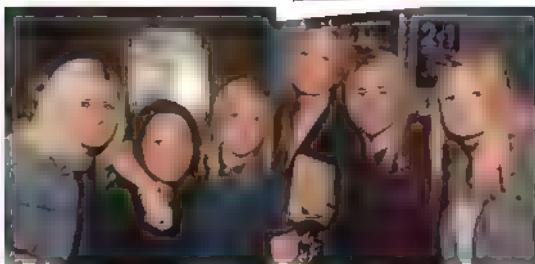
It's a great place to party at Birmingham's **Missing!**



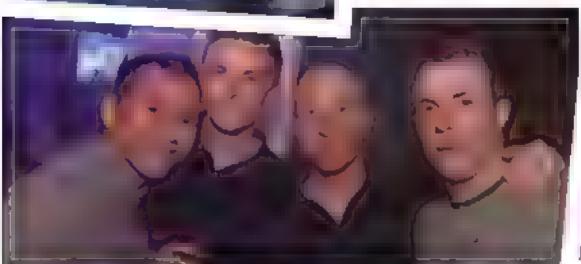
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Kickstart your night at Birmingham's **Sidewalk!**



## Birmingham's **Nightingale** gets you in the groove



Pictures by Laura Byrne

View more photos on [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/midlandszone.co.uk)  
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[THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB](#) [@NIGHTINGALECLUB](#) [THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB](#)

## A night of camp classics and more at **The Village Inn**



Pictures by Laura Byrne



# THE VILLAGE INN DECEMBER

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VICKY JACKSON  
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## Brum's Fetish Men celebrate first birthday at Eden



Photo: [www.midlandszone.co.uk](http://www.midlandszone.co.uk)



# December Entertainment

Thurs  
1st

## Ruby Murry

Fri  
2nd

## Lip Gloss

Pageant Finale with your host MISS PEGGY & DJ JASON GREEN

eden

Sat  
3rd

## Drag Triple Treat

Danny Beard, Fanny Burns, Brenda LaBeau

Wed  
5th

## Pub Quiz

Sat  
10th

## Panic on the streets of Birmingham

The Smiths Disco In The Marquee with special guest Gary Day

Fri  
16th

## Mids Bears

Bears, Cubs, Otters and their Admirers Monthly Meet-Up

Sat  
17th

## Danny Beard & Lisa Q Jones

Eden Christmas Party

Wed  
21st

## Pub Quiz

Thurs  
22nd

## Ruby Murry

Fri  
23rd

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Mon  
26th

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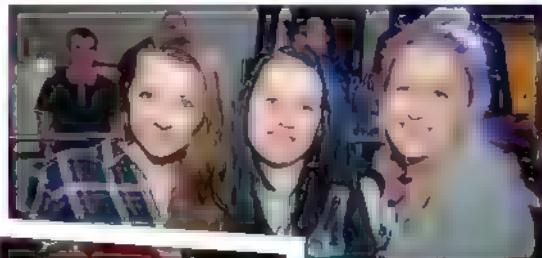
TERRACE

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# All hail Halloween at Wolverhampton's Gorgeous!



# Danny Beard raises the roof at Shrewsbury's C:21!



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VENUE KEY	
1	Left Lounge
2	The Loft Lounge
3	Bar Jester
4	Eden Bar
5	The Core
6	Boltz Club
7	Missing Bar
8	The Nightingale
9	SideWalk
10	The Village Inn
11	The Wellington
12	Valiant
13	Bar Chic
14	Pink
15	Stourbridge
16	The Bell
17	Stratford upon Avon
18	Telford
19	Three Furnaces
20	Walsall
21	The Lion
22	The Red Lion
23	Wolverhampton
24	Bond Street Tavern
25	Gorgeous
26	The White Hart
27	Worcester
28	The Flag
29	New Foresters
30	The Newmarket Inn
31	Propaganda

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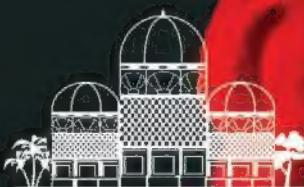
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## THE LIFE OF A THIRTYSOMETHING GAY by Stephen Spinks

### The gay rulebook

I once said 'yes' but didn't quite make it to 'I do'. You see, stood up there on the parapet of Kenilworth Castle, the sun beating down on a glorious summer's evening, my boyfriend of four years down on one knee with a shiny ring ceremoniously presented in a ruby-red box, was just the thing. He was trying to be extra romantic, with the thoughtful proposal theatrically played out on the very same spot we'd had our first kiss four years previously. He, and the castle, worked its magic and of course I said yes. On went the ring, followed with the kiss, and next came the parties and celebration with friends. You could say it was a dream come true. Well, kind of...

I never thought much about marriage. At the time of the proposal, civil partnerships in the UK were still new. And I was a child of the '80s. I'd grown up with the Daily Mail venting its spleen, claiming that queers would steal your kids, rape anyone they could find or, worse still, entice your children to the dark side like the Pied Piper of Hamlin if you so much as turned your back for a second. Civil partnerships, or latterly marriage, were not notions I'd ever thought possible, so I never really imagined the moment when it would actually land at my door.

I watched this week as the people of Paris took to the streets, bearing placards and making speeches in protest against same-sex marriage, which has been enshrined in French law since 2013.

Not only was same-sex marriage up for a bashing, but so too was surrogacy, allowing all couples, gay or straight, the chance to have children. Sad to say, this is not the first time. These scenes have been played out around the globe, from Mexico to Australia. The vanguard of often right-wing conservatism has once more been stoked up, and yet again we're called upon to defend ourselves.

The 11th of October was National Coming Out Day, an annual LGBTQ-awareness day designed to reach out to people who have yet to take that giant leap of faith and step out of the closet. Is it any wonder that people of all ages still struggle to take that step when flashed across the media are individuals or groups displaying unbridled hatred?

Same-sex marriage is now legally recognised in all, or parts, of 21 countries around the globe, including Brazil, Mexico, Canada, the US and Uruguay. Yet even in these cases, law officials in places like America find them-

selves battling an uphill struggle to make these changes stick. Go to New York State and nobody bats an eye-lid, but head to Alabama and the story is very different. As I write, eight counties within the state still refuse to issue same-sex marriage licences, despite the ruling in the Supreme Court. Clever lawyers are working their mischief and finding sufficient loopholes to untangle democratically pronounced legislation. All we want to do is share our love for one another and be counted.

Yet interestingly, I've also heard many of my gay friends raise the question, are we in danger of losing our gay identity? Are we, they ask, becoming hetero-normative? In other words, are we assimilating so much of the straight life - marriage, kids, mortgages and steady-eddy lives - that we move further and further away from what defines our culture or, worse still, from our very understanding of what it is to be gay? It's a hard question to answer. It would be easy to think that by building up our basic fundamental rights, to love, live, work and be together, we are in some ways becoming the same as everyone else. And in a way we are - and for many of us, it's exactly what we want; to be part of the bigger picture as equals rather than as the comedy act.

Yet for others, there's something unique about being gay. You know that feeling. You only have to party long enough on a school night to feel it. It comes from having a different rulebook. One which hasn't been written by our parents or generations past who define what society thinks we should be. Instead it's a book that we wrote and continue to write ourselves. It's full of expression, freedom, liberty and many inadvertent pitfalls. What better example of this than going to any Gay Pride event around the globe, experiencing a fusion of identities taking place under one banner.

Only a few weeks ago, I was talking to a close friend who, as a straight woman, had gone out with friends on the Birmingham scene, only to discover a subculture that defined its people as bears, otters, cubs, twinks and more besides. She found it impenetrable - and perhaps this is a risk that comes from being different...

Does this lead to misdirection and fear, and if so, what's its cause? Is it outsiders not understanding the rulebook, or do we keep the doors firmly closed? When people look in, all they see is sex and stigma.

Food for thought.

## ON THE BALL with Steve Ball

### Stranger danger

When I was a primary school teacher in the 1980s, my pupils were shown a rather strange film warning them of Stranger Danger. Dodgy-looking men in purple corduroy trousers were seen trying to lure children into their cars.

Following recent horror stories involving gay men falling prey to sadistic killers, I wonder if we need to produce our own updated version.

First, there's the case of Stefano Brizzi, a Breaking Bad fanatic, now facing life in prison. He met a police officer on Grindr, invited him to his south London flat for a drug-fuelled sex party, strangled him and dissolved his body in a bath of acid.

There's also Stephen Port, an alleged serial killer accused of murdering four young men he met on Grindr. He's said to have killed his victims with fatal doses of the GHB, after inviting them back to his flat.

These two psychopaths are now behind bars, but there are plenty of other cases of gay men getting into tricky situations when going on an online hook up.

Be aware of the risks; be careful about how and when you meet people in person and don't assume that the profiles you're looking at are genuine. Stay in control when it comes to how and when you share information. Don't include your contact information, such as your email address, home address or phone number, in your profile or initial communications. Never feel embarrassed to report a problem to the app provider - after all, you're helping them and doing other users a favour.

If you're going to hook up, much better to meet somewhere public before going back to his place or inviting him back to yours. Don't feel bad about calling it off if you're not keen. You don't owe the other person anything, no matter how long you've been chatting or what's been suggested.

And if in the worst case scenario you're raped or sexually assaulted on your date, call the police and/or the National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline.

Thankfully there are very few serial killers out there, but we need to remember that safer sex isn't just about using condoms - it's about keeping ourselves safe in other ways too.

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A stylized, graphic illustration of a man's face and shoulders. The man has a mustache and is wearing a blue jacket over a white shirt. The background behind him is yellow.

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